

How to Break Free From The Affair!

19 Live Infidelity Coaching Sessions

With Dr. Robert Huizenga – The Infidelity Coach

How Do I Get Him to Talk? This Dance Tires and Irritates Me

Workbook portion of audio tape with Erin

<http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com>
<http://www.infidelity-help.com>

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Part 1: Summary of Erin's Circumstances

Erin's drummer husband moved out to be with his lover, although he doesn't know that Erin knows he's with the OP (other person). The other person has a history of severe personal neediness.

He saunters back home frequently. He hasn't asked for a divorce. He hasn't said he doesn't love Erin. Actually, he has said very little. However, tears emerge periodically.

Erin recently stopped quizzing and pulling information from him. Probing did not work. She began acting "happy and confident" - as some books prescribe.

His response is friendly, less cool, but with still little self-disclosure.

To break the impasse, Erin considers telling all - what she knows that he doesn't know she knows.

As well, she practices one-liners that point to the dire consequences of his behavior, considering the history of instability and personal neediness of the OP.

Part 2: Dr. Huizenga's Review of the Coaching Session

1. The tape with Erin points to particular features of the struggle in the intimacy-distance dance of affair #7: "I Want to be Close to Someone, But Can't Stand Intimacy."

Let's start first with what was. Erin describes herself as the stable, cohesive person in their marriage. She held it together. She made decisions and for the most part, managed their lives. She was there for him. She met his needs on a variety of levels.

Family therapy circles might describe Erin as a rescuer. Her role was to pull the couple out of trouble and made sure they stayed there. For a period of time this worked.

And then her husband found someone more personally needy than he and he became the "rescuer." He relished the role, perhaps feeling a sense of power and purpose in being the "one-up." He describes his feelings in this relationship as one of being "in love."

This created, of course, tremendous upset for Erin. She no longer had a role with him. He no longer acknowledged her worth or place in the relationship other than in a perfunctory way.

So, what was Erin to do? She saw herself in competition with the other woman. Was she to become more "needy" than the other person, to stir her husband's need to rescue with her? Nope. She was not that person. And, she probably couldn't pull it off very well anyway.

2. A prominent characteristic of "I Want to Be Close to Someone, But, Can't Stand Intimacy" is superficial, forced, polite conversation. The important issues are seldom addressed thoroughly or in depth.

As a matter of fact, Erin's husband did not know that Erin knew about the details of his relationship with the other person. This was a secret, or elephant standing in the middle of the room, that went unacknowledged.

Erin attempted to strike up conversations, hoping to gain information on which to approach him or make her decisions. His responses were evasive at best. He also would send mixed vague messages. For example, he would look at her with tears in his eyes and then leave with no explanation of where he was going or when he would return.

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Break Free From the Affair describes this situation: " (you) Find yourself giving a tremendous amount of energy to the process. It takes great effort being around him. It takes great effort communicating verbally with him. You are emotionally taxed at every turn. It's like "pulling teeth" as you attempt to elicit from him some form of self disclosure. He gives you a little but not enough. You throw up your hands and he offers a little more. You ask for more and he backs away. Balancing the teeter-totter is work."

It's impossible to read a closed book. Mind reading is extremely dangerous. Erin was spending considerable energy trying to find out what he wanted and what he was thinking. She was growing weary and resentful.

She also described past strategies of pleading, begging, crying and reacting. Did not work. So, she shifted to "acting happy and confident." Neither elicited any changes from him. Erin felt stuck and powerless; doing what she thought would bring about change, but ending with disappointment and frustration.

3. I explored with Erin the possibility of telling him everything she knew about him and the other person. Erin also was throwing around that option, but had not taken any action. "What if it throws him back to the other person?" she worried.

There is more to this strategy, however. Pointing out the elephant most likely would dramatically change the pattern of the dance between the two of them. And when that pattern is changed, both enter into the unknown.

Sometimes the familiar, even though distasteful, is better than the unknown, which probably holds hope for rebirth.

This is what I say about truth telling in Break Free From the Affair:

Tip: The biggest obstacle for this couple is garnering the courage to face the truth. Truth telling (either, I'm involved with someone else or, I know you are involved with someone else) will begin the healing and growth process. Both will have an opportunity to evaluate the relationship, explore and define their needs and begin charting a future that holds for them greater freedom and enhanced capacity for intimacy. They will begin to LIVE, whether they choose to maintain the marriage or divorce.

4. I asked Erin a difficult question: "Do you REALLY want to be married to him?" This, I hoped, would stimulate Erin to think about herself. And, when Erin begins thinking about herself the doors begin to open for healing and change. This is the beginning point.

Two sub questions of "Do you REALLY want to be married to him?" put flesh on the main question and prepare her to better confront her husband in ways that might be profitable for both.

These questions are:

- How much are you willing to tolerate? and,
- When, where and how will you draw a line?

Confrontation need not be sudden, dramatic or impose an ultimatum. Healthy confrontation is well thought out, explores a number of avenues and options and can be open ended.

5. I pointed Erin to two options or strategies for which she could prepare and execute.

A favorite question of mine is: "What would you REALLY like to say to him?" The sky is the limit here. Don't censor. Think about what wells up from within. Rephrase sentences and ideas. Play with them. Don't be afraid.

The key is to get the phrases into the open and then begin reshaping them and formulating them in a way that will be heard. Your objective is not to blast. Your objective is to structure and articulate your self disclosure in ways that will bring about the highest good for both of you.

In [Break Free From the Affair](#), for affair #7, "I Want to be Close to Someone, But Can't Stand Intimacy," I refer to a tactic called Step Over Nothing.

"You don't get the response you would like? Feel like you are still "pussy-footing" around the issues? Your frustration level is mounting? Turn it up a notch by using what I call Step Over Nothing. Go for it. Be willing to say something when you hear it. Honor the inklings and

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intuitions that tell you that something is amiss in what happened. Nothing is sacred. You know that elephant is sitting in the middle of the room. Start looking at it and talking about it."

Tricky! But, well worth it.

The second strategy is making comments to him about his situation. This is called meta-commenting. You are not making comments about him! You are making comments about his situation and/or the consequences of his behavior. This is a powerful tool when conveyed charging neutral.

Part 3: Comments from Peers – If Erin's situation is/was similar to yours, list 2 things you said or did that were helpful.

- ▶ I want my husband to stop see the other person. 2. He's hiding his relationship.
- ▶ Nothing I said or didn't say helped. He would come home and if I even mentioned what was going on, he would leave again.
- ▶ My situation was very similar.... I too was competing with a younger woman who is extremely needy..... He kept everything a secret.... she kept making sure that I found out information as she continued to pursue him... He "wanted his cake and to eat it too".... I confronted him by telling him what I knew... I let him know that I would not continue to tolerate a third person in our relationship.... after 15 months of his secrets and lies and cheating... I packed all of his stuff and put it near the front door. I told him to make a choice...he could stay if he wanted to build a new life with me or he could leave and live his life and go and be happy...I told him that I had had enough and would not continue to share him with anyone..... I took charge of my life and control of me and stopped letting him make all of the decisions for us.... there no longer was "us" and she was not going to control my life at all..... he left.... we are divorcing and now after 8 months of him living with her and her 2 of 4 kids.... things are not rosey for him and he called the other day and just wanted to talk and I told him that we don't really have anything to talk about unless it is our daughter or the divorce... he said he wanted to come and "be with me" and that he was testing the water to see if I still cared about him.... he said maybe we will get back together in a few years after the divorce?????
- ▶ For me it was.....telling him that I knew the truth about what was going on and not being so responsive to him which worked for a while, but I cut myself off from him completely which got me nowhere.
- ▶ I did bring everything out into the open..I told him everything that I knew that he was hiding. It did lead to limited discussion, not as much as I wanted, but it gave me a chance to tell him why I thought he felt he needed the other woman.I shared with him your information on the #7 type of affair, and I think it did open his eyes and thus far he has decided to end it with the other woman.

- ▶ During my laser session Dr Bob suggested I too confront my husband about his commitment to making our marriage work - I wouldn't for exactly the reason Erin gave, in case it pushed him to her. I waited months before I realised nothing was going to change and I found the courage to do this. It forced him to realise that he needed to act now if he wanted me to stick around. It could have gone either way but at least I finally knew where I stood. Also I tried (and still do) NOT to focus so much on the other woman - who was also 29, fun, stay at home, all the things I'm not. I remind myself that he chose me the way I am and we raised a family on the back of that. The other woman is just a fantasy, an escape route to having to deal with our real issues. I made her a fantasy to me, twisted the mental image I have of her until it's laughable. Sounds silly but it does help.
- ▶ I stopped talking about the relationship unless the other person brought it up I kept emotional intensity down and used a very gentle voice and approach when talking or listening.
- ▶ Pointed out it takes 2 to make a marriage and 1 to make a divorce happen. I went on with my life and acted unconcerned about the affair.
- ▶ I told my husband and the OP that I knew they are having an affair. I gave them details of what I knew. Then I told both of them that I forgive them, but I don't condone what they are doing 2) I saw a counselor who challenged me to look at the pros and cons of remaining in the marriage. The counselor helped me to realize that I cannot make decisions for him. He has made his choices and I needed to take care of myself and move forward with my life.
- ▶ Still in the midst of the situation very similar to Erin's. I am going to try to comment on his situation and not him or her and see what happens. He thinks his life is a secret and I don't know maybe bursting his bubble with draw him out.
- ▶ Suggestion to let him know that you know more than he thinks is very useful in my, relatively, similar situation. There is very little space for action in such an affair. What was most helpful to me was saying I wanted to leave the country (we are both expats and come from different countries). Making things sound final prompted him to re-think the situation.

- ▶ I told him I would always love him and care about his well being, but it was obvious he was happy with her so I was letting go.
2.To be happy with whatever decision he comes to.
- ▶ I quit being nice. I am a nice person and the nicer I was to him the meaner he became to me. I was not mean or anything, just quit doing the expected. He is nicer now. He quit talking to me a long time ago, I tried to talk and it would make him angry, he pulled away more, lied and became evasive. I quit talking to him, he tries harder now to small talk, it's just a small step but easier on me.
- ▶ I have reached out for support from family and friends. At first I kept it a secret that he not only moved out of town to an apartment but that the OP was living with him. But as I needed support, I began to tell my inner circle of trusted friends & that has been of great help. I have restricted what he tells me about the woman he is living with. It hurts afresh when I hear about their activities together.
- ▶ I let him go. I wanted him to take time to be on his own so he could think about what he wanted. He went back to her for a couple of days then realized that he'd rather be with me. I told him that I missed him and that if it really was me that he wanted, I thought we could work it out together.
- ▶ Situation is identical but the OP is Japanese from Japan, 42 years old, never been married and still lives at home; this has been going on for 3 mos (time I found out); given him cards, poems and an album (recreated) showing him 32 yrs together of memories; confused him, plus I had already changed myself which he sees; I currently go to therapist by myself and he is living at his parents for now; but does same things, calls, emails, stops by, etc..... but no real discussions re: feelings, etc. He will actually stay for dinner sometimes as well as watch tv or movie; he is very confused right now.
- ▶ I am not sure that it was helpful, but I confronted my husband right away when I found out about ow. It drove him further away. He moved out next day. Although, I am not sure I made mistake. I also tried to compete in neediness -- That was a big mistake for me as I feel embarrassed even a year later. Right now I do not communicate to him at all. I let him be. It doesn't

break their affair, but at least saves my dignity. After all, if he feels happy and needed and she feels that the luxuries he surrounds her are worth to exchange for her body and youth -- that perhaps their happiness. What can I offer to beat it? My husband is wealthy now (never was before, but always wanted), she was a cleaning lady in his office. He is 53, she is 30. We were together for 23 years through thick and thin.

- No matter how it hurt I listened to anything that my husband had to say about the OW as she did many things to him because he would not leave me alone even though he kept telling her he loved her only. He told me he loved us both. I stood by with only love and compassion for him and waited it out until he finally figured it out that he only loved her personality not her character. I also corrected the things I did wrong in our marriage and we now talk a lot more about our feelings, dreams, and hopes.
- Had the courage to tell him the situation as I see it. Ask probing, yet indirect questions such as "are you getting any sleep?" to get him to talk about how he is feeling.
- I don't know if it was helpful or not but I insisted that he leave her and just tell me straight out if he wanted her or me. Even though these men act as if they don't need anything they probably have more needs than most of us and so I have worked hard to make him realize that he in fact does have needs and to please admit to them. After that I try to meet those needs for him.
- Being clear that he needed to discuss personal issues with me not a fun coworker 20 years younger 2--saying I love you and care about you and want to build a relationship and am willing to hear what's wrong with me/us but I am not going to stand by while you spend fun time with another woman.
- I did not pressure him into making rash decisions. He is one that if you pressure he will do things or say things he would not do otherwise. After 24 years of marriage I had learned this the hard way. 2nd, I would not talk about divorce with him, I could not because it was something I felt I knew he did not want, just the only think to do to move forward.

- The elephant in the room. For me, it is still there. I have been struggling with how to word the feelings and knowledge I have inside. I am like Erin, I know a lot more than what he has told me, and that is the thing that is tearing me up. I am also one to say, "I don't know what tomorrow hold, but the eggshell are being crushed more each day. Hearing you role play words for Erin to think about is so helpful. Yes, she needs to know within herself where the line is drawn. So where's the elephant gun.
- I know more of what you imagine, I am not going to compete with another woman and we should seek quick solutions.
- I confronted the situation by talking first. second I showed proof.
- I confronted him with the evidence of his affair. He never admitted to anything - but somehow it made me feel better to have it out in the open. 2. If you are lucky enough to have a good support system (I was extremely BLESSED)USE IT!! A good support system is invaluable as you attempt to find your way.
- I addressed facts/opinions on y partner's affair after charging neutral for several months
- My unfaithful boyfriend has also started stonewalling me. He converses with me rarely and when he does, it is very superficial. I started talking to his mother and his friends, which gave me more information. I think when your partner is stonewalling, we do that. Not sure if it is healthy. True, we get more information, but then what? It doesn't change anything, but I felt better after understanding the whole picture. It helps me to be less upset about everything.
- I stopped pleading and begging. I told my husband I love him enough to let him go, and then he has never left However, I am still alone after 3 years with my husband dropping the legal proceedings. I leaded my life alone, worked on my growth, and stopped focusing on his activities.
- The situation is the same is some ways - my husband will not open up to me either. He lives a secret life. I liked her advise, be strong, be confident. I think I need to start setting boundaries myself. I liked telling him "I know more than you think I do" and

"I feel like something is going on" Also, I've never told him I hate competing with younger women.

Part 4: Comments from Peers - From your personal experience and what you have learned about infidelity, what 2 suggestions would you give to Erin?

- ▶ He needs someone who needs him to rescue her. 2. Stop try to compete with other person.
- ▶ I wish I had the answer for her. I went to an attorney to freeze the assets. So far that has not happened and he is not talking to me at all now because I went to an attorney.
- ▶ It has nothing to do with sex.... sex is the act of lack of control on the part of the spouse and their inability to cope with their own problems and unhappiness in their life..... First.... learn to know what you want and what makes you happy..... you can't control anyone else or make anyone else happy... you can only be the best you..... Second..... you have kids to take care of and they need you now more than anything else.... Dad can't give them much because he is a mess right now.... you have to be the one to take charge and take care of yourself, your kids and your financial future..... You have to take care of it all and be the cement to the kids or they are at risk to fall into all kinds of trouble.... hang in there.... with or without him.... you will get by..... look to your inner strength and to God.... they won't let you down.... don't be hard on yourself.... you did not choose this... but don't be a victim either...
- ▶ You can still love him, but don't put your life on hold for him, making yourself lonely and cutting yourself off from others. Interact with others still and save your alone time for reflecting about how you are going to handle the situation.
- ▶ Tell him you know everything. Let him know why you think he feels he needs the other woman.
- ▶ Stop trying to change yourself to solicit a response from him. I too tried being bright and fun or pointing out where he was wasting his time with "her" but you just can't change what he thinks. Focus on who you want to be, how you want to be, it will be more genuine and that will show.
- ▶ With love and concern Erin can talk to the other lady, to find out her needs and views, since loving are not a crime 2. Erin should talk openly to her husband too and encourage him to be truthful to her.

- ▶ Stay strong. Don't be critical.
- ▶ It's not about you. The cheater puts his/her own desires first. It's the cheater's character flaw, not yours.
- ▶ Take an honest and hard look at why you are holding on to him. You cannot control him nor can you rescue him out of the horrible decisions he has made. 2) He needs to be needed and you are not a needy person. That is a good thing. Successful marriages are an equal partnership. Is/was yours?
- ▶ Don't dwell on the other woman if he has not filed for divorce. Be kind and compassionate, pay attention to him and give affirmation. Compliment him.
- ▶ In my case, finding out broke the course of events that was about to follow and was going to be similar to the one that happened with Erin's marriage. And many other things are very similar too. I cried when I heard Erin talk about sharing their likes with other woman now. I definitely suggest that she lets her husband know what she knows next time he comes to visit. Also, rush as it may seem, maybe to pack some of his things or presents he gave her and give to him next time he comes around and behaves politely. Honesty has to be valued and maybe he needs to learn about it the hard way. He might miss honesty in his life.
- ▶ It really helps me to read, read and read some more on saving your marriage after infidelity. 2. Talking with someone who is totally unbiased.
- ▶ Face reality, he is having an affair, He does not want you now at this time, he is in sick mode and does enjoy what he is doing. It is not your fault, he chose to do what he is doing, he could have chosen another way to have you meet his needs, but he chose the affair. Let him live with the guilt, work on yourself, be guilt free and don't let him ruin your spirit.
- ▶ Get yourself emotionally prepared to give him up. Your own self-respect will require that you end the relationship with him if he does not end the relationship with her. This is a very difficult process that I have been agonizing over now for seven months. Be kind to yourself! You are a good person and did not deserve

this. You did not drive him to be unfaithful. He could have chosen to re-connect with you. It is okay to keep loving him as long as you need to, but love and take care of yourself.

- ▶ To definitely tell him what she knows. I think part of the reason he does this is because he thinks she doesn't know. He's getting away with it in his mind. He probably doesn't want to hurt her, and it could well be a relief to him to have her tell him she knows because it's obviously too difficult for him to tell her himself. The tears and confusion on his part show that he is having great difficulty in knowing what he should do. He's got himself in a mess and he doesn't know how to clean it up.
- ▶ Relationship gone for 6 mos.; unfortunately, when I normally go to Japan 2x per year, 2006 was only 1x due to daughter's graduation, college prep, other daughter's wedding, birth of grandson, and my mother's operation; as result of these items I never made the 2nd trip, and affair started then; infidelity, I believe started as result of him needing something you could not give at time for whatever reasons; his non-communication, indicates a problem in marriage, mine too; by not confronting Erin directly, it seems that he will have problem w/ next new relationship due to not being able to deal w/ immediate issues w/ current relationship at hand; I started being somewhat self sufficient and doing things that make me happy..... not being so "needy" (geez, I hate this word too!); but I did tell him that I still care, etc..... Still in same boat as Erin, so now I am thinking of my next step as well.....
- ▶ It was a second serious affair my husband had. At least what i know of. After first one 9 years ago I made a mistake not to work on its consequences in real depth when he was willing to do everything to get me back. This is a real tragedy for me now and only thing I deeply regret. He does not know how express his feeling other then in acting out. I would talk, but I always afraid to hurt his feeling (acting as his feelings are hurt his main defense and it worked for a while with me). Life together after an affair is very difficult and requires a pot of energy and mutual love. Really ask yourself question: Do you want to marry this man?
- ▶ To my husband infidelity was a FANASTY. He was fine until she left her husband and started pressuring him to leaving me, which I don't think he never would have if I hadn't thrown him

out. He referred to the OW as a princess. Her house their dream house that he put a lot of work into, with no appreciation from her. (She also had a lot of issues, molested by her Dad and bad relationships) I feel that love wins out in the end as he truly saw that my love was real and hers was not. She went out with other men to force him into a decision to leave me. I guess in my case waiting and being patient was the answer. It took a year back and forth from me to her over and over.

- ▶ Be proud of your job and enjoy it while this is going on--who wants to be a helpless, needy person? Try not to idealize or demonize him or your past relationship--he may not have been as wonderful as you thought, nor is he (probably) evil.
- ▶ I hate to see you wait around to see if he is going to leave the other woman or not. If I were Erin I would try harder to make him open up to her other than just allowing him to walk in and out and do as he pleased.
- ▶ Be clear in your mind what you will tolerate then tell him 2-- don't wait for him to decide--the uncertainty is painful and it's better to throw it all out in the open and try to see if he'll discuss it.
- ▶ The more I did stopped calling and text messaging him or emailing him, the more he started to call, text and email me. Then when I would not answer he would wonder why because that was not usually me. I changed some of my behavior when around him like keeping my hands to myself. We always held hands or touched each other. I told him how hard it was not to touch him when I was around him, but knew that he had someone else touching him and that he didn't want my touch. He became very sad and said he didn't want to hurt me.
- ▶ Be strong, don't turn into the OP. Your children know. When they come to you for questions on Daddy's behavior, be honest, but tell them you need to talk to your father, because I can't answer how he feels or what his feelings are. Start a life with you and your children as the focus. If your husband see this as a constant from you, he will get sick of always being needed by the OP and may come back, but then the question on you would be will you let him and on what terms.

- ▶ The best than you could have done is to stop crying and begging, now you need to stabilize your emotions to be able to confront him in a nice way.
- ▶ Don't try to hide or cover up things or hold back to keep from hurting the cheating spouses feelings. Everything should be out in the open.
- ▶ I would talk to him and get answers. Confronting the situation I believe helped my husband end it.
- ▶ I have learned that my husband didn't need me for anything. His young partner was able to validate and idolize him and he NEEDED that. I don't know that I have any answers but I have tried to come up with ways to validate him (which is difficult when you are trying to keep your hands from around his neck) without sacrificing my integrity. I have also tried to let him know when he's done something that makes me happy. I don't know HOW one competes with someone over 15 years their junior. I do believe that at some point a line must be drawn for one's own sanity. I don't quite get how this becomes all about them, it's something that I have struggled with. I have myself tried though to deal with his issues over mine but that doesn't seem to be helping at all.
- ▶ You will probably NEVER get all the answers you are looking for - in terms of the affair. Put the fact that you know what is going on out on the table - then back off. It is not worth the energy to cry, plead etc for him to talk to you. If he doesn't want to - he won't. Focus instead on what YOU want to do now, and then take the steps necessary to make it happen. 2. Your husband's affair is in no way, shape or form YOUR FAULT! He CHOSE to break his vows to you; no one held a gun to his head, and for whatever "guilt" he may or may not be feeling, you and your feelings never really entered into the picture when he made the decision to step out of your marriage. He had the option to be honest with you and ask for a divorce BEFORE he took the step, but he took the cowards way out and became a liar and a cheater. It was HIS choice!
- ▶ For myself, my fear was asking/stating too much and making the situation worse. Since my partner is now living with the op for 10 mos., I finally realized, what else did I have to lose? I had charged neutral in letters, conversations. On two occasions I

"lost it".. I would still feel powerless because of their co habitation, but I KNOW they have large issues. I take more chances now.

- Some men want to be rescued from their infidelity, but they don't know how to ask.
- Continue appearing to be happy and confident, as well as as little contact with him as possible. 2) Tell him that she knows he is with the other woman.
- Don't comment about other person. It seems to push them toward the 3rd party. My situation is different, because he legally separated. He has disclosed it. I guess he has that right. Continue for her to act nice. Don't compete with needy person; be the best person she can be.
- My therapist has suggested that if I want him to open up more I need to express my feelings more. This has worked with mixed results. He still won't open up completely and he often lies, but slowly, progress is being made.

Part 5: Comments from Peers - List a couple benefits you received from listening to this tape.

- ▶ Draw a line, I will not wait forever. Tell him you know about the relationship and put it out in the open.
- ▶ My situation is very similar to Erin's. It was helpful to have confirmation that his confusion doesn't necessarily mean that he knows what he is doing, even if it seems they are making future plans (unrevealed plans). It is hard to back off and avoid communication, but I have to allow him time to figure out what he is going to do. No matter what I do, if they are determined to be together, they will be. My state does not allow for divorce without cause, so he cannot file, which means I have time on my side. I just have to decide how long I'm willing to be patient.
- ▶ Sounds like there are others with similar situations that I have. One way conversations, talking to a brick wall. I love my husband also, but I am not about to share, even after 36 years.
- ▶ Once again... it was great to know that I was not alone.... except for the names and a few other things.... this could be my story.... and the doctor's advice is so right on....
- ▶ When my husband told me he did not know if he loved her or if it would work, I believed him. Only to find emails that said how much he loved her. Although, he stayed married to me for almost 2 years after he left our home, he finally sought a divorce. When a man is ready to move on, he will at any cost.
- ▶ I think being caught up in the newness and excitement of a "new love", he is forgetting what the 2 of them shared together. He does not realize the "newness" will wear off with the other woman, and he will most likely regret all he has given up with them.
- ▶ Be wary of finding solace in this other woman's husband. He may need someone to talk to but do you need a man who is attracted by neediness? Find another friend, join the chatroom, step away from this guy.
- ▶ I know that sharing is difficult. But if you approach the situation in a different angle, if he loves both of them equally, and agrees to be truthful to both of them, to save a marriage, it is also an

option. Three of you should sit and talk about the position, with minimum anger towards each other.

- It's really important not to judge, although it's very hard.
- It will never be the same. It could be better than ever, but it won't return to what was normal.
- Gosh, get into a Divorce Care Group. It saved my life. I realized that I had built my entire life around a person and not God. I realized that for any marriage to be successful there must be a strong foundation. Sex; Financial Stability; Needing to be needed... These things do not make a strong foundation. Trust, respect, sacrifice, open/honest communication, and unconditional love make a stronger foundation. Bottom line, Erin... If God's not in it... It's doomed to fail.
- Mine was looking for attention. Is a conflict avoider and when I was not doing what he needed he did not know how to fix it or approach the problem so someone else realized this and she was a needy person and gave him the attention he needed. At a MC session I asked "did you love her?" He said" Yes, but maybe it was all the attention" Our therapist was useless and he went back to her.
- It is very hard to deal with a person who discloses little about himself or his secret life, it is hard to achieve intimacy and trust. Except for some details and actions, this sounds very much like my situation, although my husband has decided to stay and try save the marriage. I would suggest letting him know that she has told her closest (really closest) friends what she knows and how supportive they have been. The thought of her having intimate, caring friends sheds a new light on her and himself. Also, breaking the secrecy of the affair changes the dynamics of it.
- Work on you!!!!
- It does not make sense, when you hear Erin's story you think "why does she want to stay married to him and be treated that way" yet, I am basically in the same boat and everyone is asking me the same question, "how long do you want to stay married to him and be treated that way?" Hearing someone else's story really opens one's eyes.

- ▶ Keeping a daily journal of at least three pages a day has been very helpful. I have been following a format from a book called "The Artist's Way" and it has been an anchor to hold onto during this terrible time in my life.
- ▶ Try to focus on yourself and do what makes you happy; I am hoping my husband comes around, but after 3 mos., still too early in the game..... but making myself feel better and having great support from friends, family, therapist and priest helps to balance myself out better; so, in the long run, I "believe" I can handle the outcome either way it goes. Just keep your fingers crossed for me.....
- ▶ Practice love to your self everyday.
- ▶ I guess just being there for him. Where else are you going to go or do? Be patient, don't argue or fight, but be strong and be and do what makes you happy. If he finds himself it will be you that he wants not the OW. If not, then you will be a stronger person. I also spoke with the OW. She would call me to find out what was going on and if he had been with me. I only told her the truth, which made her mad and they fought all the time about me. I think it is good to do this even though at times I knew she was lying, but she knew what he was doing with me and I knew how things were going with them.
- ▶ It's so painful thinking you have to compete with someone who is what you wanted to be or even once was. You have to constantly be aware of what a great person you are and how confused your husband is and that he may make a mistake he will regret.
- ▶ Too similar. It does not make sense, when you hear Erin's story you think "why does she want to stay married to him and be treated that way" yet, I am basically in the same boat and everyone is asking me the same question, "how long do you want to stay married to him and be treated that way?" Hearing someone else's story really opens one's eyes.
- ▶ My husband also looked information up about getting a divorce without lawyers. He didn't want to pay them all this money when we could do it ourselves. I told him that only works when both want the divorce. When he typed up the paperwork, I did consult

a lawyer, told him I didn't want this and didn't think my husband did either, so he told me that I couldn't stop it but I could slow it down and maybe give him time to think. So I changed a few things on the paperwork and he got mad and then the paperwork went stagnate. I also didn't talk much about the other person. Sometimes he would tell me of a situation that was not good with her, and then apologize because "you probably don't want to hear this". He was right, but I just listened. Seems I was always there when he had a bad day. He started sharing good things happening to him at work, and also bad days. I wondered why share with me instead of her... Then I would not make myself so available. Then he would pull away again and get angry that I was 'ignoring his phone calls'. I just told him it hurt too much knowing that he was with another and still wanted me too. Can't have both. He would still call late at night and sometimes I would answer and sometimes I wouldn't. Sometimes I would just send him a little text saying that "I love you", or "hope you have a blessed day my luv", etc. Part of the reason was to send him a message letting him know I was thinking of him, still. Other times I would send them when I knew they were together so that she would also see that I was not giving up. This went on for 3 years. I became even more independent, we had to sell our home, he tried to buy a home and couldn't, our daughter got married, our son was in a car accident, my mother died. Lots of major things I had to go through without him by my side. He broke up with his girlfriend and then began dating another. 6 months after his breakup, even while seeing another, he began calling and talking and asking me to have a drink with him, or go out to a movie or spend time together, I always said no, you are with another, I will not be the other woman, I am your wife. Eventually I did see him around our 27th anniversary. It progressed slowly and he finally broke it off with the other woman in January. We still have separate places but I am with him most of the time. It is difficult sometimes, the elephant still seems to be in the room and things are not said. It is like we are playing house. He did agree to marriage counseling about 2 months ago. It is going slow but steady. He warned her about the time we had counseling before and the counselor pushed him too far to talk about something he wasn't ready for and he walked out. We never went back. She is being very careful I think because we don't want to lose him but she knows we need this deeply if we are to get through this. It seems the elephant is still in the middle of the room, even at the counselors. Now the mood

swings are returning and it is a little frightening. I know that I have not done everything right, but know that we have done some things right. I know there is hope because he is still agreeing to counseling until I feel comfortable. I also want him to feel comfortable. Like Erin, we need to talk, but how far too we go, how do we stop from spewing out all the frustration? Time is on our side and one day at a time is how it feels.....

- ▶ Look a support group for situations like yours, can be the church or another place, do not remain alone in your house imagining things.
- ▶ Be honest and real....no matter how much the truth or reality hurts. Keeping the truth hidden or sweeping dirt or concerns under the carpet will only intensify problems in the future. Playing make beleive when dealing with infidelity only prolongs the hurt, deception, and misconceptions.
- ▶ I am probably not the best person to give advice to Erin. Three years ago I found myself in a very similar position. My husband had been transferred out of state. We decided he would move there for a year (and come home on weekends) and "test the waters" in terms of job satisfaction etc. Within six months I had a "gut" feeling that something was very wrong. I hired a private investigator and found that he had moved out of the hotel where he was living and rented an apartment with a woman who worked at the same company. Although I had mounds of physical evidence - to this day he has never admitted what he did. As far as I was concerned then, and now..there was no choice but divorce. Once the sacred bond of trust was broken, for me there was no going back. I knew that I would never be able to REALLY trust him completely (as I had for nearly 30 years) again. I also knew that I would never be able to fully forgive him. During the divorce process I learned of multiple affairs he had had during our marriage. In some ways, although extremely painful - this added information added to my resolve. My divorce was finalized two years ago this June and I still think it was the best decision I've made for myself and my kids in 20 years. I wish Erin the best, but I really cannot relate to wanting in any way to continue to be married to someone who has had an affair. I honestly believe that her efforts would be better spent concentrating on forging ahead with making a new life for herself and her children. I CAN tell her that she will be much

happier in the long run!! The energy wasted on a liar and a cheater is just that....wasted energy.

- ▶ I don't feel confident advising anyone yet.... When i finally have/feel a 'breakthrough", I may feel a bit more qualified. This has truly been the loneliest, difficult undertaking in my life. I still have hope though, from reading your book.
- ▶ Erin's husband's tears indicate he is very conflicted. She should say something like, "You seem so sad since you moved out." Then she should say nothing more.
- ▶ Be honest with your spouse if you know something they are not telling you. Do not allow them to live in a lie. I feel lies help fuel the affair. It adds to the excitement of the secrecy.
- ▶ Develop friends and nurture relationships. I've been doing a lot of Al-Anon meetings. We are powerless over infidelity. There is usually emotional immaturity, family dysfunction and alcohol in both our backgrounds. If not alcohol, co-dependency (Co-DA) or Emotional Anonymous can help us. As we change, and not react, our husbands change. By me not angrily reacting, my husband has stopped becoming angry and can't blame me for our relationship problems any more. Even if I was right, but got angry, then I was the target for his crazy thinking where he blamed me for everything wrong. HOPE THIS HELPS.
- ▶ I don't think this comment is helpful, but I need to say it. It is scary to set boundaries, because you might have to follow through and end the marriage!!